

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 121

By Yager

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Arzo Carson on the celebration of his 100th birthday.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly pay tribute to those citizens who are celebrating special occasions in their estimable lives; and

WHEREAS, Arzo Carson celebrated his 100th birthday on January 17, 2023, a milestone that was commemorated as yet another precious souvenir of life's rich pageant; and

WHEREAS, the "founding father" of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI), Arzo Carson was born on January 17, 1923, near Oneida to John M. Carson and Lavada Laxton Carson; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Carson was raised in the Tunnel Hill community and graduated from Oneida High School in 1941; he served honorably as a member of the U.S. Navy during World War II and earned degrees in philosophy, business, and law from the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, beginning his life's work as an attorney in 1952, Arzo Carson practiced law with future U.S. Senator Howard Baker before becoming a partner in the Carson & Wilson Law Firm; and

WHEREAS, in 1966, Mr. Carson was elected as District Attorney General for the Nineteenth Judicial District, which presides over cases in Scott, Morgan, Campbell, Claiborne, Fentress, and Anderson counties; and

WHEREAS, Arzo Carson administered justice equally and fairly under the law throughout his estimable fourteen-year tenure as District Attorney General for the Nineteenth Judicial District; and

WHEREAS, in 1979, newly elected Governor Lamar Alexander sought advice and recommendation from citizens, members of the legislature, law enforcement officers, district attorneys, judges, and members of the judiciary in establishing an appropriate unit of

government with the specialized professional personnel and facilities to discover and investigate any and all crime within the State; chief among the governor's many advisors was Arzo Carson; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Carson was tasked with making recommendations to the governor and legislators for the enactment of a law to create a permanent comprehensive criminal investigation functionary of government for Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Arzo Carson, working with a committee, drafted the major parts of a proposed act creating the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, which was formally considered in the legislative process, enacted into law, and signed by Governor Alexander on March 27, 1980, with Mr. Carson named by the governor to serve as the first director of the newly created TBI; and

WHEREAS, among the many advances realized by the agency under Director Carson's leadership were improvements in forensics, computer science, intelligence gathering, and educational and training requirements for agents and other personnel; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Carson served two terms as Director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation before taking his much-deserved retirement in 1990, at which time he was conferred the honorary title of TBI Director Emeritus; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, in a fitting tribute of Mr. Carson's innumerable contributions to the citizens of this State, the General Assembly named the TBI headquarters in Nashville the "Arzo Carson TBI State Office Building"; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Arzo Carson is most grateful for the many years of love and companionship he shared with his wife, Shirley Laxton Carson, before her passing in 2021; and

WHEREAS, as Mr. Carson enters his eleventh decade, he continues to be a highly regarded member of his community who is admired for his wisdom, guidance, and generosity; and

WHEREAS, we wish to grasp this golden opportunity to specially recognize one of Tennessee's most outstanding citizens on this very special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate Arzo Carson on the celebration of his 100th birthday, thank him for his meritorious service to this State, and extend to him our best wishes for much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.